



# United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
ALASKA FIRE SERVICE  
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June 23, 2003

Instruction Memorandum No. AK-300-2003-021  
Expires: 06/01/05

To: All AFS and NFO Employees

From: Manager, Alaska Fire Service  
Field Manager, Northern Field Office

Subject: Claims for Personal Property Loss or Damage

**Purpose:** This Instruction Memorandum explains Northern BLM procedures for filing personal property claims against the federal government, under the Military Personnel and Civilian Employees' Claim Act of 1964 (MP&CE).

Types of property loss or damage not covered under this IM:

- ? **Loss or damage to Government property:** Refer to the appropriate property officer.
- ? **Contract Claims:** Processed by a Contracting Officer (Procurement).
- ? **Third Party Claim (Tort Claim):** Submit information to Financial Services (FS) for processing.

**Policy/Action:** The MP&CE outlines rights of employees, official volunteers and casuals to claim reimbursement for loss or damage to personal property that occurs in performance of duty (Personal Property Loss or Damage (PPLD) claim).

The Department of Interior Manual Part 451.3.2, *Loss or Damage-Employee's Personal Property*, states "damage or loss must be incident to the employee's service, and possession of the property must be reasonable, useful, or proper in the circumstances." Therefore, only items that are necessary for the performance of duty are covered. Refer to the Departmental Manual Part 451 and the Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook, Chapter 70 for additional information and guidance.

Alaska's Regional Solicitor (RS) delegated determination authority for BLM employee claims of up to \$1,000 to the State Director (SD), who re-delegated authority to the Manager-Alaska Fire Service (AFS) for Northern BLM employees. The RS processes PPLD claims over \$1,000 and claims submitted for reconsideration.

Every employee is responsible to know their rights and responsibilities for PPLD claims, to apply the information in this IM, to show due diligence and care for all property used in performance of their duties.

FS is responsible to process all PPLD Claims for Northern BLM.

**Reimbursable Items:** FS surveys local stores and catalog suppliers to establish a standard item and price list for typical field-use items (Attachment 1, 2003 - 2004 Reimbursable Items List.)

If an item on the Reimbursable Items List is available from the BLM or Fire Cache inventory, but you choose not to use it due to personal preference, you might not be reimbursed. If you claim an item not on the Reimbursable Items List that exceeds the established amount, you must explain why the item is necessary to the performance of duty. The documentation you submit and statements from your supervisor and others are key elements of the adjudication process.

You are advised to talk to your private insurer for a coverage determination before using your Privately Owned Vehicle (POV) for government business. Loss or damage to a POV used for government business may not be covered under the MP&CE.

**PPLD Reporting Procedures:** Complete a PPLD Claim Package and submit it to FS within 60 days of property loss or damage. The completed package must be signed by:

- ? Team lead or supervisor (AFS and NFO employees).
- ? Zone Fire Management Officer, Staff Officer or Division Chief (AFS employees).
- ? Field Manager (NFO employees).

Attachment 2 is a sample PPLD Claim Package. If the BLM forms are not available, use local forms or plain paper.

The Master Rental Insurance Coverage, Secondary Personal Effects Insurance covers loss, damage, or theft to individuals who rent vehicles with their government charge card. Coverage is limited to the government cardholder who rented the vehicle and signed the rental agreement. Coverage does not apply if you pay for someone else to rent the vehicle. You must report the loss to the Master Card Assistance Center within 30 days of the incident and submit a claim within 180 days. Because this coverage is secondary, you must complete the PPLD claims process and/or file with your private insurance prior to submitting a claim to Master Card.

**PPLD Processing Procedures:** Your PPLD claim will always be routed through your home unit and processed by FS. If you are away from your duty station, report the occurrence to your on-site supervisor and complete the required forms, following local, established procedures. Submit your completed, original forms to FS through supervisory channels.

FS sends claims filed by other-agency employees to their home unit for adjudication. Claims from State of Alaska employees are processed according to the terms of the Cooperative Fire Protection Agreement. Claims from the Denali Hot Shot Crew are processed according to terms of the Chugachmiut Agreement, adjudicated as Tort Claims and are not covered under this memorandum.

Once your PPLD Claim is accepted for full or partial reimbursement, you will receive a letter, a copy of the completed Administrative Determination, a Payment Voucher for the approved amount, and direction for processing the reimbursement payment. Payment is normally made by Direct Deposit.

If you are dissatisfied with the Administrative Determination, you may request reconsideration by filing the appropriate documentation with the RS. The RS issues a written determination within six months of receipt.

**Manual/Handbook Sections Affected:** None

**Time Frame:** This IM is effective immediately.

**Contact:** For technical assistance regarding PPLD Claims, contact Financial Services at (907) 356-5780.

Signed by:  
Scott Billing  
Manager, AFS

Robert Schneider  
Field Manager, NFO

Authenticated by:  
Shirley Goforth  
Records

2 Attachments

- 1 – 2003 - 2004 Reimbursable Items List (1 p)
- 2 - Sample Claim Package (3 pp)